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In The Claims:

Please cancel claims 5, 9, 12, 14-16, 19, 22 and 24-25 without prejudice.

1. (Amended) A method for monitoring and controlling one or more [a plurality of] devices in a common environment, comprising [the steps of]:

[receiving] collecting usage information from the one or more [of the] devices by a computer coupled to the one or more devices;

storing the usage information in [on] a memory [device of a] associated with the computer;

[using the computer to automatically access] periodically accessing a remote database by the computer, the remote database containing information [regarding] specific to the one or more devices;, the computer accessing the remote database to:

[transmitting] transmit the [stored] usage information to the remote database[;], and

[receiving] receive the information specific to the one or more devices from the remote database; and

[generating an action to be taken by the device using the information from the remote database and stored usage information] transmitting a control signal from the computer to the one or more devices, the control signal being generated by the computer based on the information received from the remote database.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information comprises:

an average length of time the one or more devices [is] has been in operation over a period of time;

a number of occasions the one or more devices [is] has been in operation over the period of time;

a number of times maintenance was performed on the one or more devices over the period of time; and

types of maintenance operations that were performed on the one or more devices over the period of time.

3. (Amended) The method of claim [2] 1, wherein the remote database is accessed by the computer via an internet connection.

4. (Amended) The method of claim [2] 1, wherein the remote database is accessed by the computer via a point-to-point connection between the computer and the remote database.

6. (Amended) The method of claim 1, [wherein the remote database is updated at intervals using] further comprising:

updating the information contained in the remote database specific to the one or more devices [generated] by a manufacturer of [a device of] the [plurality of] one or more devices.

7. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more devices [are] include at least one home appliance[s] and wherein the common environment is a house.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more devices [are] comprise [items of] manufacturing equipment and wherein the common environment is a manufacturing facility.

10. (Amended) A computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions, which, when executed, cause a computer to [perform the steps of]:

[receiving] collect usage information from one or more [of a plurality of] devices operating in a[n] common environment;

[storing] store the usage information in [on] a memory [device of] associated with the computer;

[connecting the computer to] periodically access a remote database, wherein the remote database contains information [regarding] specific to the one or more devices;

transmit the usage information to the remote database;

[receiving] receive the information specific to the one or more devices from the remote database; and

[generating a suggested action to be taken to maintain the device using the information from the remote database and the stored usage information] transmitting a control signal from the computer to the one or more devices, the control signal being generated by the computer based on the information received from the remote database.

11. (Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 10, wherein the stored instructions, when executed, further cause the computer to [perform the steps of]:

[receiving] receive an [identification] identifier of a device when the device is initially [placed] installed in the common environment; and

[storing] store the [identification] identifier in such a way that it [is] becomes associated with usage information collected from the device.

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13. (Amended) The computer readable medium of claim [10] 11, wherein the usage information collected from the device comprises:

an average length of time the device [is] has been in operation over a period of time;

a number of occasions the device [is] has been in operation over the period of time;

a number of times maintenance was performed on the device over the period of time; and

types of maintenance operations that were performed on the device over the period of time.

sub-b5
17. (Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 10, wherein the one or more [plurality of] devices [comprises] include at least one home appliance[s] and wherein the common environment is a house.

18. (Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 10, wherein the one or more [plurality of] devices [comprises items of] comprise manufacturing equipment and wherein the common environment is a manufacturing facility.

sub-b5
20. (Amended) A system for automatically maintaining and controlling a plurality of devices, comprising:

a computer controller [including] having a memory, the computer controller being coupled to each of the plurality of devices;

a remote database that contains sets of information specific to each of the devices;

a transmission line [that is] coupled to [a] the remote database [containing information regarding each of the plurality of devices] and to the computer controller for data transmissions therebetween; and

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a software program stored [on] in the memory, execution of the software program [that directs the automatic maintenance and control of the devices including] directing the computer controller to periodically [connect to] access the remote database [via the transmission line,] to transmit usage information received from the plurality of devices to the remote database, and also to receive the sets of information specific to the devices from the remote database, the software program further causing the computer controller to transmit control signals to the devices based on the sets of information received from the remote database [uploading information collected from the devices and downloading the information regarding each of the plurality of devices].

23. (Amended) The system of claim [22] 20, wherein each of the plurality of devices includes an identifier and wherein the computer controller accesses a record in the remote database that contains information specific to one of the plurality of devices by transmitting the identifier.

Remarks

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application as amended. Claims 5, 9, 12, 14-16, 19, 22 and 24-25 have been canceled from the application, and claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-11, 13, 17-18, 20 and 23 have been amended to more clearly distinguish the subject matter of the claimed invention from the prior art. No claims have been allowed.